

STATEMENT BY WILLIAM J. CROCKETT, DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY FOR  
ADMINISTRATION BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON STATE DEPARTMENT  
ORGANIZATION AND FOREIGN OPERATIONS - WEDNESDAY, MAY 19, 1965

Mr. Chairman:

I am pleased to be able to present to you and to members of this Committee the Executive Branch views on H.R. 6277. This piece of legislation which is now before you for consideration is technically a number of amendments to the Foreign Service Act of 1946 and other related laws.

It is in fact, however, a major proposal which would enable the Executive Branch to establish a single, unified and integrated foreign affairs personnel system. In addition, it also incorporates proposals to provide benefits to employees serving war-torn areas of this world.

I wish to make it clear at the outset, Mr. Chairman, that our sole purpose in supporting this legislation is to increase the efficiency and economy of the foreign affairs activities of the U.S. Government. It is vital to the national interest that action along the lines proposed in this legislation be taken.

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A world of crisis is a world of opportunity for those who can grasp it. A world of crisis is a world of action and reaction for those who can meet the challenge. This is the world in which we live. This is the world in which, as President Johnson stated:

"Our ability to seize the opportunities and to use our vast resources to further the aims of the United States foreign policy must in large measure rest on the dedication and capabilities of people involved in our foreign activities. In no other area of governmental activity is it more vital to our national interest to develop and retain a corps of well-qualified men and women."

That is what H.R. 6277 is all about. It is fully consonant with the objectives stated by the Congress of the United States in Section 111 of the Foreign Service Act of 1946. H.R. 6277 complements provisions and authorities already existing in the Foreign Service Act of 1946.

Since 1946 the role of the United States in world affairs has changed drastically. The amendments to the  
Foreign Ser-

Foreign Service Act before you are a recognition of this change. No longer is the business of foreign affairs the monopolistic sphere of State Department interest, but in fact involves to one degree or another the functions and responsibilities of many executive branch departments and agencies. No longer is there a reasonable and clear-cut distinction between the domestic activities of the Department and its overseas operations. The legislation you are considering today accepts these facts of life and tries to establish a new personnel system which is responsive to today's realities.

I might add, Mr. Chairman, that the thoughts which have led us to our conclusions were basically those incorporated in some of the recommendations of the Wriston and Herter Committees. There are a number of themes which run through both of these reports. Both groups were in complete accord that the differences existing both within the Department of State and among foreign affairs agencies should be eliminated as rapidly as possible. We have proceeded through

ceeded through administrative action to comply with the essences of these reports. As much uniformity in operations as could be achieved administratively has been done. We now need legislation to take the final steps in eliminating the unnecessary differences among people in essentially the same kind of business. One of the main purposes of the legislation before you is to establish a single, unified, and integrated personnel system, operating under the general responsibility and direction of the Secretary of State, which is broad enough to fill the personnel needs -- both overseas and domestic -- of the major foreign affairs agencies. This is not to say that all employees of the foreign affairs agencies will be the same category of personnel. We will continue to have different categories of personnel, but to the extent possible, essentially all will have the same rights and privileges and be subject to the same personnel policies.

I would like to take a minute at this time to express to the Committee how the amendments before it will permit us to accomplish our objectives.

At the present, the Department of State, USIA, and AID  
are staffed

are staffed by personnel belonging to one of two entirely different personnel systems: Civil Service and Foreign Service. The Foreign Service is itself subdivided into three categories: Foreign Service Officers, Foreign Service Reserve Officers, and Foreign Service Staff officers and employees.

We intend to continue the Foreign Service Officer Corps essentially as it is presently constituted and authorized. The Foreign Service Officer will be the key representative of the United States abroad in the political, economic, information, and cultural functional fields. Foreign Service Officers will also be expected to serve much of their time here in the United States, because we consider it essential that they become acquainted with domestic operations, because it will provide opportunities for closer contacts between Foreign Service Officers and the American public which they serve, and because of the urgent need for personnel in Washington who have had overseas experience.

As a related category of personnel, the bill will enable us to establish a Foreign Affairs Officer group by converting Civil Service officers from the Civil Service to the Foreign

to the Foreign Service. The primary mission of these officers will be to staff positions here in the U.S., although if they indicate interest in overseas service, we will try to accommodate them. It is for this reason that we are requesting an amendment to Section 111 of the Foreign Service Act to make it unmistakably clear that this act covers personnel both at home and overseas. It is also for this reason that we are requesting a deletion of the current provision which limits the appointment authority of reserve officers to two successive five-year periods. It is our intention to use Section 522 as amended by this bill, which authorizes appointment and assignment of Reserve officers, as the legislative authority for the appointment of Foreign Affairs Officers.

We foresee the need to continue Foreign Service Reserve appointment authority, but will utilize this authority primarily to appoint people for a true reserve category. Reserve Officers will be appointed for limited periods in order to make available to the Service such special skills as are from time to time required either at home or abroad. We also hope to establish a stand-by reserve, consisting of personnel  
in the academic

in the academic world and the business community and other non-government groups who are willing to serve intermittently on relatively short notice, both at home and abroad according to the needs of the Service.

The final major category of personnel that we intend to utilize in foreign affairs work will be designated as Foreign Service staff. Our hope is to broaden the present authority which permits the establishment of a staff corps in order to incorporate into that group the clerical and semi-professional employees whose principal base of operations will be the United States. I should note that the staff corps includes both officers and clerical personnel. We have for some time used Foreign Service Staff Officers to man many of our professional requirements in the consular and administrative fields. This we intend to continue, while at the same time considering the possibility of broadening it to include domestic personnel requirements in these fields.

Much has been said about our amendment to Section 633 of the Foreign Service Act which would extend the selection out system to all members of the new foreign affairs personnel system. Most of the criticism has been uninformed or misleading. As

or misleading. As this Committee knows, the selection out system has been in effect for the Foreign Service Officer Corps ever since the enactment of the Foreign Service Act. It is a system which through the accepted American principle of competition, enables the Department to maintain a highly competent Foreign Service Officer Corps. The present system enables us to retire officers who are not able to compete with their colleagues in the same class. It is not arbitrary. It is not harsh. It is equitable. For the period of 1959 to 1964, the Department selected out 240 Foreign Service Officers, out of an officer corps of approximately 3600, for an average of less than 50 per annum. I think these statistics are sufficient to relieve anybody's concern that our selection out system is a method to discharge large numbers of employees. It was never intended to be used for this purpose and there is no justification to believe that it will ever be that way. The selection out system must and should be viewed as an effective tool of management which ensures that a group of people



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group of people that are key to the national welfare and interest are always required to perform at maximum efficiency and effectiveness.

We do intend, if the legislation before you is passed, to extend the selection out system to the Foreign Service Staff Officers. However, for this particular category we would select out only those officers who do not maintain an adequate standard of performance. An officer could rank numerically low in his class year after year and not be selected out as long as he performs in an adequate manner. We shall also extend the selection out system to the Foreign Affairs Officers, for they too are key to the national welfare. The President has made it clear that he expects that all officers in the foreign affairs field perform in accordance with the highest standards.

As the Committee knows, the President has recently signed an Executive Order "providing for the appointment in the competitive Service of certain present and former officers and employees of the Foreign Service." This will

permit quali-

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permit qualified Foreign Service personnel to obtain appointments to Civil Service positions without re-examination. This Executive Order will greatly ease the transfer of employees under the Foreign Affairs Personnel System to the Civil Service.

Furthermore, we believe it unsound to have officers or employees working side by side with one being required to meet one standard of performance and the other an entirely different standard. Such a situation exists at the moment. It is not equitable, just, or effective. I should point out to the Committee that we do not intend to extend the selection out system without also providing severance pay to all covered by the system.

Section 22 of H.R. 6277 has created a considerable amount of debate. The purpose of this amendment is to once again, ensure that all personnel who are working side by side in the same general area of foreign affairs are treated equitably and in accordance with the same principles.

This is the situation at the present moment with the

U.S. Government

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U.S. Government Civil Service system. All Civil Service employees are subject to the same basic rules, regulations, and policies. There has never been any argument in opposition to this concept. Therefore it is difficult to understand why there should be any objections to establishing a single personnel system applicable to all personnel engaged in foreign affairs functions.

It has never been the Administration's intention to include in the foreign affairs personnel system any individual who is not fully engaged in a foreign affairs activity. If the Committee is concerned with the fears expressed erroneously by certain government employees, we are preparing to submit for the record a statement which would ensure that transfer into the foreign affairs personnel system would apply to the employees of the Department of State, the Agency for International Development, and the United States Information Agency, for the present. As an alternative, the Committee may wish to consider the deletion of the phrase " and such personnel as he may designate who are engaged in foreign affairs functions." As a third possibility

possibility, the Committee may wish to add in the legislation a requirement that any transfers beyond those specifically listed would require Congressional approval, similar to the method used now for reorganization plans.

In this connection I would like to mention just briefly the situation of the Agency for International Development. The President's letter of May 6, 1965 to the Vice President and the Speaker stated "There will be a single Foreign Affairs Personnel system, broad enough to accommodate the personnel needs -- domestic as well as overseas -- of the Department of State, the Agency for International Development and the U.S. Information Agency,..." He also charged the Secretary with the responsibility "to insure that personnel policies and actions of the Department, AID, and USIA are guided by uniform standards and criteria." The Administration is not prepared at this moment to state what specific actions will be taken to include the Agency for International Development in the new foreign affairs personnel system. The degree of coverage and the time for such actions are matters which the President and the Secretary have yet

tary have yet to determine. In any case, there is no doubt that the system will be applied to all employees of the Department of State and the United States Information Agency.

As the Committee knows there are a number of provisions in H.R. 6277 which deal with the benefits for foreign service personnel and matters intended to improve the administration of foreign affairs activities. I would like specifically to call your attention to three amendments which would:

1. Permit continuation of employees in duty status if they incur injury or illness arising from a hostile action in the line of duty.

2. Permit increasing the differential from the present limit of 25% to a limit of 50% when an employee is assigned to duty in a foreign area where there is unusual danger of injury directly due to hostile activity.

3. Permit payment of travel expenses of employees and dependents when warranted by extraordinary conditions or circumstances involving unusual personal hardship.

Hazardous conditions continue to exist around the world  
and can be

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and can be expected to arise in the future. Our employees and their families are not adequately covered at the moment and risk serious loss of life, limb, and earning capacity through their willingness to serve the United States under very hostile conditions. The U.S. Government can do no less for its employees than to protect and improve their earning capacities under these situations to a reasonable level.

In closing, I might just say that the proposal before you has encountered some criticism. The criticism implies that management's decisions might not always be judicious, and that there will be loss of existing protection mechanisms. As for the first point, I of course disagree strongly. There is no factual evidence known to me that would support an indication of arbitrariness on the part of the Department's management. On the contrary, as I earlier indicated, we have used the existing selection out authority sparingly and only after exhaustive reviews and discussions. The fact of the matter is, however, that our proposal is not  
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a one-way street. It does provide some increased benefits to personnel transferring from the Civil Service to the foreign affairs personnel system. Furthermore, I personally find it difficult to justify the retention of mediocrity in an area so vital to the welfare of the nation as the foreign affairs functions. We expect that every employee in the foreign affairs personnel system will measure up to high standards expected of him by the President and the nation. We intend to insure that every employee on the payroll of a foreign affairs agency is absolutely essential to the performance of the functions. With the passage of the provisions included in this bill, we can develop a personnel system whose members will be proud to belong to it. Passage of this bill will enable us to perform effectively and efficiently and will give the nation maximum efficiency at a minimal cost.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you and your colleagues for the opportunity you have provided me in making this statement. I would like at this moment if I may, Mr. Chairman, to introduce into the record a letter I have here for you from the Secretary of State, indicating his strong support of H.R. 6277.